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USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE OFFICE OF INFORMATION · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

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MARKETING AMERICA'S FOOD PROCEDURE SECTION
CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

Remarkable Facts. Did you know the number of grocery stores in the U.S. dropped from 260,000 in 1960 to 204,000 in 1971? . . . The volume of farm products entering the marketing system has risen over a fourth since 1957-59? . . . The U.S. food marketing system services more than 200 million Americans by getting farm products to consumers when, where, and in the form they want them? USDA's Economic Research Service has compiled a wealth of such marketing facts into a new leaflet, "Marketing America's Food." The leaflet gives, in quick reference form, facts on food expenditures at home and away, on marketing, processing, packaging, transporting, and selling food, and on new "market accepted" foods. If you have been shopping around for some concise information on food marketing copies of "Marketing America's Food" (ERS-446) are available free from the Information Division, Office of Management Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

A LIGHT IN THE DARK

Primarily Red, Blue, Or Yellow. Man's need to see after dark has resulted in "night lights" over much of our environment: lighted streets, highways, parks, even private yards. The lights are a boon to man, but a bane to his trees. Scientists tell us that only a pin-prick of light in the middle of the night can affect the blooming schedule of some plants. Just think what it can mean to trees, shrubs, and other plants along streets that are flooded with lights all night long. According to USDA scientists, not only is the length of time the plants are exposed to light important, but the kind of light -- red, blue, or yellow -- also has an effect. Mercury vapor lamps, standard street lights for many years, have only a slight effect on growth and development of green plants. However, the blue light given off by these lamps often attracts hordes of plant eating insects. To avoid this undesirable attraction, many cities substitute "color improved" lamps for the blue ones. These are not really the answer either. The red light emitted by these lamps cause the green leaves of many kinds of plants to stay on instead of dropping in autumn. This delays the dormancy period leaving the plant vulnerable to cold weather damage. Yellow light seems to be the best compromise in many cases. It attracts fewer insects than the blue lights and has little effect on plant growth. In any lighting program, planners would do well to consult the State or municipal horticulturists for guidance in selecting the right night light to avoid plant blight.



SELLING CONSUMER EDUCATION

To The Sellers. Few things change as fast as men's and women's fashions. One reason for the fast change is the increasing variety of natural and man-made fabrics available to designers and home sewers. These fibers have added beauty and comfort to 20th Century living, along with confusion on fabric care, sewing methods, and fabric uses. Consumers often depend on sales people for advice and information on fabrics. All these problems were of concern to Mrs. Ruth Scarlett, an Extension Service home economist in Yakima County, Washington. She became convinced that training department store sales personnel in clothing and fabrics would be an excellent way to benefit customers. The training was launched with a short-term program for 45 sales people from two department stores and a drug store. The success of this program prompted a training venture for sales staff of a department store chain. Working closely with the personnel manager for the chain's large store in a new shopping center, Mrs. Scarlett conducted a series of 20 training sessions. Sales staff from fabric, fashion, sportswear, infant and children's wear, and boys' and men's wear participated in the one-hour sessions held twice a month. Regulations on labeling clothing, label notations and instructions, natural and synthetic fibers and their uses and care, fabric finishes, clothing construction details, and fiber and fabric terms were included in the training. The personnel manager is convinced that the training program will be beneficial to both the sales staff and to the customer; Well-informed sales clerks who can answer questions and volunteer useful information can help the consumer make more astute and satisfactory decisions about their purchases.

NOVEMBER PLENTIFUL FOODS LIST

Traditional Favorites. Turkeys, the traditional bird for this time of year, and rice are the featured foods on the November Plentiful List. Other foods expected to be in abundant supply and often offering attractive buys for the consumer this month include broiler-fryers, eggs, apples, applesauce, apple juice, cranberries, cranberry sauce, and cranberry juice cocktail. For December, the Plentifuls will include turkeys again along with eggs, broiler-fryers, cranberries, cranberry sauce, applesauce, fresh oranges, tangelos, tangerines, and dry beans.

ANOTHER COMO COMPRAR

Los Huevos Joins Other Foods. "Como Comprar Los Huevos" (How To Buy Eggs) tells what the grades and sizes of eggs mean and gives tips on using and storing eggs. This is the sixth -- and newest -- in a series of pamphlets on how to buy food issued in Spanish by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. The pamphlets explain the USDA grades for food and tell how consumers can use this information and other food buying advice to make better selections in the store. Single free copies of "Como Comprar Los Huevos" (G-144S), and of each of the Spanish "how to buys," may be obtained from the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. The other pamphlets are:

Como Comprar Fruta Fresca (G-141S) (How To Buy Fresh Fruits)

Como Comprar Hortalizas Frescas (G-143S) (How To Buy Fresh Vegetables)

Como Comprar Bistecs (G-145S) (How To Buy Beefsteaks)

Como Comprar Carne para Conservar en el Refrigerador (G-166S)

(How To Buy Meat For The Freezer)

Como Comprar Habas, Guisantes, y Lentejas en Seco (G-177S)

(How To Buy Beans, Peas, and Lentils)

A STAKE IN YOUR HOME

What Wood You Use. Wood products come in more forms and from a greater variety of trees than ever before. What was most suitable for a particular use a few years ago may not be so today. It is more important than ever to be selective in choosing the most appropriate wood product for use in construction, remodeling, or maintenance. "Selection and Use of Wood Products For Home and Farm Building," a publication from USDA's Forest Service, is designed to aid the builder or home owner in making the best choice for a particular need. One section of the booklet deals with requirements for principal home and farm uses of wood. For example, the usual requirements for exterior trim of a house include wood that has medium decay resistance, good painting and weathering characteristics, maximum freedom from warping. This information is followed by a list of suitable woods and their degree of suitability. Another section classifies woods according to important properties -- such as paint and nail holding abilities, hardness, freedom from shrinking and swelling, bending strength -- and gives principal uses for each. Lumber grades, information on standard lumber items in retail yards, and basic principles -- often overlooked -- that should be followed in good construction are included. Copies of "Selection and Use of Wood Products for Home and Farm Building" (AIB-311) are available for 60 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

CLOTHING REPAIRS

A Stitch, Patch Or Darn In Time. Few of us enjoy repairing clothes, but it does pay off in better appearance and savings. Using up-to-date methods can help cut the size of the mending pile and extend the life of the family wardrobe. One up-to-date method is to help family members learn respect for their clothes and something about the high cost of rips and tears. But a child on the playground or a husband engrossed in repairing machinery usually doesn't have rips and tears on his mind. So its into the mending basket, box or drawer. Among the clothing repair equipment and aids you keep on hand, you might want to include a USDA publication, "Clothing Repairs." In this publication you will find information on supplies that will help with your mending; basic repair stitches and their uses; reinforcement of garments before they are worn; patches and darns; and mends for damage commonly found in family clothing. The publication is liberally illustrated with photographs and line drawings of mending problems and solutions, and different kinds of stitches and patches. Step-by-step instructions are included for many of the repairs. Copies of "Clothing Repairs" (G-107) are available for 25 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

CALORIES AND WEIGHT

They Go Together. A popular little USDA bulletin can help you get a running start on sensible holiday eating. The publication, "Calories and Weight," gives the number of calories for dozens of foods and dishes -- including the traditional holiday fare. For example, 1/7 of a 9-inch pumpkin pie has 275 calories; one tablespoon of canned cranberry sauce has 25; three ounces of white meat from roasted turkey has 150, the dark meat, 175. The booklet has some valuable tips on dieting to lose weight or to maintain weight with an eye to good nutrition. A guide for estimating servings of meat is a help in judging how many calories to count for the meat you eat. Should you decide not to be sensible or if the holiday fare is more than your will power will stand, "Calories and Weight" can be used to support New Year's resolutions. The bulletin, which is pocketsize, is easily carried to be whipped out when in doubt about the calories in whatever is facing you on the plate. Copies of "Calories and Weight" (G-153) may be ordered for 30 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

'Tis The Seasoning That Makes It Jolly. Spices and herbs have been prized since the dawn of civilization. Marco Polo and Columbus went looking for them; Shakespeare and Chaucer wrote about them. Today a great variety of spices and herbs are still adding aromatic aromas and pungent flavors to everyday and exotic dishes. There is no general rule for the correct amount of a spice or herb to use. The pungency of each differs and its effect on different foods varies. A happy side benefit of this difference is that with a little spice and herb experimentation, a cook can add a touch of her own personality to her cooking. Some tips on how to use and to store spices and herbs are included in a fact sheet prepared by USDA's Agricultural Research Service. The publication lists more than 35 spices and herbs along with the types of foods each can be used with. Cooks -- from the novice to the sophisticated -- should find "Seasoning With Spices and Herbs" (CA 62-24) helpful in adding spice to their lives. Copies of the fact sheet are available free from the Information Division, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Hyattsville, Maryland 20782.

HOW TO BUY DAIRY PRODUCTS

To Drink, Chew, Or Spread On. Milk comes in more forms than almost any other food. Wise buying of these various products is the subject of a recent pamphlet in the USDA "How To Buy Foods" series. "How To Buy Dairy Products," (G-201) can help you shop for the whole array -- from milk to yogurt. One section of the little pamphlet is a "dairy dictionary" which defines the various dairy products and gives buying, using, and storing tips for each one. Illustrations of the USDA quality grade shields used on dairy products processed under USDA supervision are included, along with the requirements processors must fulfill to earn the shield. Another handy reference is the milk equivalency chart which shows the quantities of various dairy products needed to supply the amount of calcium found in a cup of fresh whole milk. For example, one and one third cups of creamed cottage cheese can be substituted for one cup of fresh whole milk -- calcium wise. Single free copies of "How To Buy Dairy Products," are available from the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

USDA'S 1972 CHARTBOOK

Tells Agriculture's Story. USDA's new 1972 Handbook of Agricultural Charts illustrates the story of America's crops and livestock, farmers, food marketers, and consumers. The 170 charts depict what's happening in the general economy, the farm commodity scene, foreign agricultural trade, marketing, farm populations, and family levels of living. Single free copies of the Handbook (AH-439) are available free from the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Color slides and black and white photographic prints of the charts are for sale from the Photography Division, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Slides are 35 cents a frame or \$22.00 for the 157-frame set. The 8x10 prints are \$2.00 each.

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write: Lillie Vincent, Editor of Service, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Telephone (202)